



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Presidential Youth Indaba on Jobs & Skills

28 Feb – 3 March 2014, Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg

1 March 2014, Panel 4:
‘Public Employment Schemes and Rural Youth’

Input: TW Nxesi, Minister of Public Works

PROTOCOL

- Programme Director
- Comrades and compatriots

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important discussion – addressing vital issues of youth and rural unemployment.

Overview

In the context of global economic crisis – which has caused our own economy to slow-down – thus limiting the capacity of the economy to create jobs; in this context, the role of Public Employment Schemes – such as NARYSEC, EPWP and CWP becomes vital.

Government has recognised that we have to up-scale and embed public employment schemes across government and across many aspects of the economy.

In this respect we have a good story to tell. I am not saying – by any means – that we have solved the problem of unemployment. I am saying that we have built a solid foundation for Public Employment Schemes so that we can expand and improve going forward.

Over the last 5 years we have created 4.5 million short-term job opportunities. So when we say we will create a further 6 million job opportunities over the next 5 years, we know what we are talking about.

The leader of the DA called these ‘bogus jobs’:

- *She doesn’t understand the depth of the economic crisis we face.*
- *She doesn’t understand the scale of government’s response and the success we have had hitherto; and*
- *She doesn’t understand what is going on in her own backyard. The Western Cape – Cape Town in particular - has fully embraced EPWP projects.*

Of the 4.5 million job opportunities created in Phase 2 of EPWP (2009 – 2014):

- 50% went to youth
- About 70% of these were in rural areas.

We have a good story to tell – but it keeps getting better: for Phase 3 (2014-2019) the targets have been increased:

- To 6 million job opportunities;
- The target for youth opportunities increases to 55% - and on new programmes the target increases to 80% to align with the Youth Accord target.

NYS – National Youth Service programme

Besides the general targets there are programmes which focus specifically on youth development. NYS – National Youth Service originated with National DPW and was then extended to all provinces through the efforts of the provincial departments of public works.

The NYS Programme creates work and training opportunities in artisan skills and community service delivery areas.

It includes work on large infrastructure projects eg. construction of magistrates courts, correctional and health facilities, as well as maintenance projects.

Technical training is provided in artisan trades such as: electrical, plumbing, plastering, tiling, painting, carpentry and roofing.

[Nothing ‘bogus’ here.]

In Phase 3 (2014-2019) the focus will shift towards more accredited training. For next year - 2014/15 – National DPW and provincial DPWs will collectively aim to recruit 8,000 more youth onto the NYS Programme.

EPWP programmes benefit rural areas

Let me provide examples of EPWP programmes – and the contribution they are making:

Road maintenance (run through provincial departments of transport)

In EPWP Phase 3, routine road maintenance programmes such as Eastern Cape Household Contractor programme, Iterele, Siyatentela and Zibambeke will be further rolled out, largely in rural areas. The road maintenance programmes:

- create work opportunities for poor rural households through the use of labour-intensive methods;
- target the poorest of the poor; and
- selects beneficiaries through community forums to ensure transparency.

Working for Water (run through the Department of Water Affairs)

The Working for Water programme addresses the management of invasive alien plants (eg Wattle), because of the effects that these have on water quantity and quality, biological diversity and the functioning of natural systems and the productive potential of land. Linked to this also is the utilization of the cleared invasive biomass for energy and furniture manufacturing.

In the Working for Water programme, 86% of work opportunities are created in rural areas.

The Working for Water programme has massive benefits to the economy. It has been calculated that due to the intervention of Working for Water, R35.2 billion is saved annually on water that would otherwise be lost.

[Nothing bogus here.]

Working on Fire (run through DAFF)

Today WoF employs more than 5,000 young men and women who have been fully trained as veld and forest fire fighters and are

stationed in more than 200 teams throughout South Africa. Of the 5,000 persons employed, 85% are youth and 37% are women.

Working for Wetlands (run through Environmental Affairs)

Through the programme, 427 wetlands have been rehabilitated – important for biodiversity and sustainability.

Social Sector

The EPWP also responded to social concerns, for example the Gauteng Department of Education identified the following challenges in schools, namely:

- The lack of support for learners on homework – due to socio-economic conditions at home, parents' levels of literacy and child headed families;
- The lack of safety at schools, targeted by drug dealers, school assets (computers) vulnerable; and
- Many learners not physically or creatively active after school hours.

In response, the EPWP rolled out - from 2011 –

- homework and sports Supervisors on a half day basis through the provision of 8,200 supervisor work opportunities at 911 schools, and
- 5,052 safety and security personnel work opportunities at 1,263 schools.

The social sector of the EPWP focuses on training extensively. These courses assist beneficiaries to obtain long-term employment. Examples of training offered are:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) National Qualification Framework (NQF) 4 and 5,
- General Security Learnerships,

- Palliative care, Ancillary Health Care NQF level 1, Bachelor Education foundation,
- Child & Youth Care NQF level 4, and
- Pharmacy Assistants NQF level 3, and Nursing.

[Again, nothing bogus here.]

Training in Phase 3

A number of areas speak to training and skills development in Phase 3 of EPWP.

The Departments of Public Works and Higher Education and Training have partnered to provide EPWP beneficiaries with skills through short-course, learnership and artisan interventions. EPWP programmes now provides training in a huge variety of skills:

- on basic life support & first aid procedures
- handling and disposal of waste
- paving surfaces using flexible segmental paving
- setting out cast concrete foundations and building slabs
- managing basic personal finance
- applying herbicides to noxious weeds
- applying basic fire fighting techniques
- fertilising soil and attend to basic plant nutrition
- cutting felled timber using a chainsaw and maintaining the chainsaw
- manufacturing jewellery by soldering components
- construction contract documentation and implementing site administration procedures on a construction project
- basic business concepts
- providing frail care
- making wire and pierce basic geometrical shapes from metal plate
- manufacturing of clothes
- manufacture a wire bracelet
- planning production of craft products
- erecting fencing
- facilitating a peer education intervention
- recognising pests, diseases and weeds on crops

- using labour intensive construction methods to construct repair and maintain structures
- seedling production for vegetables and garden maintenance
- counselling group members in respect of HIV AIDS.

Concluding remarks

Historically EPWP has provided a social safety net for those who are unemployed but do not receive social grants. EPWP also provides an opportunity for work experience and training.

In many cases EPWP projects also restore people's sense of pride and dignity. They are working – for which they receive a small stipend – which in turn allows them to contribute to their families.

As we move towards the end of this Administration and the start of the next (for 2014-19), government is keenly aware of the global economic crisis which retards domestic growth and constrains the economy from creating new jobs. Amongst the various strategies adopted by government two are of direct relevance:

- The National Infrastructure Plan – massive investment in infrastructure – to kick start economic growth and job creation, and
- Given the likely persistence of large-scale structural unemployment for the foreseeable future, Public Employment Schemes (such as EPWP) will be up-scaled and embedded across the public service.
- In the light of this, we are also looking at EPWP in new and creative ways, eg:
 - More permanent part-time work – eg for road maintenance;
 - Greater emphasis on training;
 - Projects linked to 'greening' and sustainability such as the 'Working for Water' project;
 - Community based projects to improve local infrastructure, and

- The expansion of social services to communities – such as ECD, and home-based health care.

We have made a good start. We have a good story to tell. The task now is to take this solid foundation, and build on it. I thank you.